

LAKE JAMES STATE PARK PARK PROFILE

PARK PURPOSE STATEMENT

Lake James was developed for hydroelectric purposes by Duke Power Company. It was completed in 1923. Lake James State Park was established in 1987, becoming the first North Carolina state park created under the provisions of the State Parks Act of 1987. It is also the first park in the state's history to receive funds for acquisition, development, and operation upon its creation.

The park serves North Carolina's residents and visitors by providing opportunities for appropriate outdoor recreational use, providing opportunities and facilities for viewing and enjoying the major scenic values of the area, protecting wildlife and natural communities within its boundaries and providing interpretive and environmental programs that allow visitors to learn about the significant resources of the area.

Lake James is a significant statewide recreational resource. A man-made lake fed primarily by the headwaters of the Catawba and Linville rivers, it has a surface area of 6,510 acres and a shoreline of 150 miles. Lake James State Park is a primary provider of public water-based recreational facilities and access to the lake. It is the only public park on the lake. Facilities provide for a range of activities, including boating, picnicking, swimming, fishing, hiking, camping, photography and natural resource interpretation.

The park affords outstanding scenic vistas of the surrounding Appalachian Mountains and the Black Mountain Range, including the prominent features of Shortoff Mountain, Dobson Knob, Linville Mountain, Table Rock and Hawksbill Mountain. The dark-blue waters of the lake provide an excellent reflective surface for mirroring these significant scenic features. The view directly north of the park frames the nationally significant Linville Gorge.

A diverse biota is found at the park, which can be attributed to the mixture of Piedmont and Montane Forest and the presence of the lake. While no records exist for rare and/or endangered species at the park, there is a wide variety of songbirds, waterfowl, reptiles, amphibians, small mammals, wildflowers, trees and shrubs. Lake James State Park is one of the few places in North Carolina where Carolina and Canadian Hemlock grow in close proximity.

Lake James State Park exists as a state park primarily because of its important recreational and scenic values. The Division of Parks and Recreation is charged with preserving these and other values and providing park experiences that promote pride in and understanding of North Carolina's natural heritage.

PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES

Provide Quality Outdoor Aquatic Recreation: The purpose of the park's 605 acres is to provide public access and facilities on Lake James. Interpretive activities include aquatic studies and recreational safety.

Wildlife Habitats: This theme focuses on the natural history and adaptation of animals that live in and around the lake.

STATISTICS

Visitation (1999)	356,464
Operating Budget (FY 98-99)	\$ 284,945
Revenue (FY 98-99)	\$ 28,735

VISITOR FACILITIES

Primitive camping (20 sites, showers)	Drinking water
Picnic area & shelter	Seasonal concession area & canoe rental
3 Hiking trails (2.8 miles total)	Lake swimming
2 Boat access areas (1 open 24 hours)	Lake fishing
Restrooms	Pay phone
Handicapped accessible trail (0.14 mile)	

CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION NEEDS

1	The Hidden Cove improvements project will remove and replace existing boat ramps, expand parking by 20 spaces and pave all spaces, regrade and pave the access road, and construct a Romtec style toilet.	\$490,479
2	The courtesy docks project will install 3 sections of floating dock at the campground, replace the dock at the picnic area, and install a courtesy dock at Canal Bridge.	145,769
3	The group camp development project will provide 2 group camps, access road, central washhouse, gate, internal trails, parking, well, septic system and underground electric service.	493,621
4	The park museum/interpretive exhibits project includes office basement exhibits, trail head display and kiosk.	250,957
5	The trails development project will provide a river section loop trail, 10 car parking spaces, 2 bus parking spaces and a 60-ft. pedestrian bridge.	274,671
TOTAL:		<hr/> \$1,658,497

REGISTERED NATURAL HERITAGE AREAS

Lake James State Park currently has no Registered Natural Heritage Areas.

FUTURE LAND ACQUISITION NEEDS

Completion of the Lake James State Park master plan will require the acquisition of 1,970 acres. High priority acquisitions include an inholding that adversely affects park operations. There are efforts underway to provide a major expansion of the park on the north shore of the lake, encompassing an estimated 1970 acres.

Master Plan Total Acreage	2,575 acres
Current Park Acreage	<u>605 acres</u>
Acquisition Needs	1,970 acres

1999 STAFF POSITIONS

Permanent		Seasonal		Peak Load
Park Superintendent II	1	Park Attendant	3	
Park Ranger II	11	Refreshment Stand Manager I	1	
Park Ranger I				
Maintenance Mechanic III	1	Refreshment Stand Clerk	3	
Office Assistant III	1	General Utility Worker	1	

PROPOSED STAFF ADDITIONS

Permanent	Seasonal	Peak Load
Maintenance Mechanic I		